

Students at KWAX do it all, classically

Classical music airs 18-hours-a-day

The written "goals" of KWAX, the University's public radio station, note that students who work there can get experience for a variety of jobs.

The volunteers, interns, and paid staff members at KWAX agree.

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The training a student can get by working at KWAX is quite valuable if the student is willing to put in the time, she says.

Working at the station demonstrated other ways — besides performance — to be involved with music, says Karen Nestvold, a senior in music performance who is a KWAX announcer.

Dan Dodderidge, a junior with a double major in telecommunications and broadcasting, says he started working at the station to "get involved in my major" but now works primarily to help the station.

KWAX, operating at a 91.1 FM frequency from the third floor of Villard Hall, dedicates about 70 percent of its airtime — at least 18 hours a day — to classical music, and has for many years. Nestvold says that more radio drama on the station has been considered, but not at the expense of classical music.

The classical music mode was established in the 1960s by studying what music was and was not available in the area, according to KWAX promotional literature.

Students are usually on the air or in charge of what's on the air for all but four to five hours of programming per day, says chief announcer Peter Armetta. More than 25 students currently work at KWAX, which began in 1951 as a student extracurricular activity.

Jordan, who is on the air Sunday mornings from 6 to 9 a.m. and Thursday nights from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., says working exposes her to a lot of music and literature about music. She has considered

becoming a "disc jockey" but probably won't, she says.

"I appreciate the opportunity to learn about radio," she says.

Operating under the auspices of the University relations office, KWAX receives half of its operating budget from state funds. As a member of National Public Radio, five full-time paid staff are a requirement.

Students don't seem to be interested in managing the station, says general manager Janet Kenney although a few students are "finally" interested in promotion and development and the "operations" phases of the station.

Direct student funding through incidental fees amounted to only about \$1,700 this year — less than 1 percent of the station's budget. The ASUO Executive has recommended the same amount for next year, despite cuts in over-all student funding of University activities.



Pam Jordan, one of many students and volunteers, works the KWAX boards

Students are crucial to the day-to-day operation of the station, but employing so many students is also based on a philosophical decision, not just financial concerns, Kenney says. The decision has been made that KWAX serve educational functions since it is located on campus, she says. So far it hasn't relied on many community volunteers, she adds.

There are many college stations now that use few students and have little connection with the college they're affiliated with, Kenney says.

Community volunteers are more stable than students, but probably less interested in learning

up with it," says Nestvold, whose father — Karl Nestvold — is an associate broadcasting professor at the University journalism school.

She is also more interested in writing about music than being an announcer after graduation, she says. Nestvold says she once carried a double major in music and journalism and that seeking a master's degree in journalism is not out of the question.

"I like performance, but I want to do something else with my music," she says.

Her music background helps her put together programs of various musical pieces for broadcast, Nestvold says. Working for KWAX "is a wonderful opportunity for people to get experience."

Other volunteers don't view KWAX from such a practical perspective.

"I'm just having fun with it right now," Dodderidge says. "I don't want to be an announcer or do production work at a radio or TV station."

On the air from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, he also has a weekend spot on KSND. Work at KWAX isn't hard, just time-consuming, he says.

Dodderidge, who says he is one of a few students doing both announcing and production at KWAX, adds that he often does production work on weekends as well.

Eventually he would like to go into advertising or public relations, Dodderidge says.

As for now, "I'd like to keep busy and active at KWAX," he says. "There's a lot of work to do to keep a radio station going."

His only qualm with the overall working environment of the station is that the non-student staff is "small and overworked."

Volunteers are now being sought in particular, Nestvold says, adding that most students getting paid at KWAX volunteered there previously for at least one term.



Pat Eysenbach, left, does production while Karen Nestvold announces. Nestvold says KWAX is "a wonderful way for people to get experience."

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